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This I Believe

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**I Will Live Forever**

     The way we live determines who we are, but what we leave the world shows how we have lived. Who we are and what we do makes an impact. For this reason, I believe that a life that leaves no trace is a life wasted.

    How do I make an impact? I say "Good morning!" to someone in the hallway to provide a positive outlook on the rest of his or her day. Making greater differences is more difficult seeing as not everyone is able to reach out to millions of people. However, I can make an unimaginable difference by reaching out to those who are neglected. My acts may inspire other people to follow my lead. In taking charge, I am more than aware that success is not always achieved, and I will no doubt fail at some point along the way. Our fear of failure is all that stands in our way from making a difference.

    How does success affect being influential?  Success does not mean being rich or famous - it merely means achieving a goal or stepping out of our comfort zone.  I may never know how one act affects another person, but at least I know I made an effort. I believe that the only success that matters is the success I have in influencing someone. Being a rather shy person, I was terrified to converse with a table of homeless men, but I sat myself down, talked, smiled, and learned. I did not succeed in providing a meal to every hungry person in the world, but my attempts to feed and touch a small community may have inspired just one person to do the same - and that's all it took to leave a part of myself behind.

    How do negative events create a positive impact? Mankind has the ability to create beauty out of turmoil. Take Hitler for example. Hitler impacted many lives with his distorted opinions. Yes, he was responsible for countless unjust murders, but his acts brought our world together. His prejudice taught us that all people are equal and deserve the same freedoms, and anything besides this belief causes widespread damage and suffering to the physical and emotional psyche of the world population. The ability to gain positive insight after tragic events inspires the world to make a change.

    How do I leave part of myself behind? Although in dying we physically leave this world, our actions and beliefs remain in the minds and hearts of those we have known. We must understand and believe that all people have the responsibility to care for others, and in doing so, we leave behind our love, our heart, and our dreams. A friend of mine used to calm my nerves during competitions, and since his passing, I still hear his comforting words in my head when challenges arise. Providing smiles, sharing pleasant thoughts, caring for strangers - all these deeds have the ability to positively affect someone long after we are gone.

    When I leave this world, I want to leave behind people that I have touched. I want to have changed their lives for the better and to have inspired them to do the same for others. By sharing dreams and doing good deeds for others, we pass a piece of ourselves to everyone we meet so when we are gone, they are left to live for us and carry on our legacy. All people are capable, and I hold everyone responsible for making our world a better place. Every day I dare myself to pass on my memories and experiences, successes and failures, goals and dreams with those around me and by doing so, I will live forever.